

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1 and 19 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A chat system comprising:

a plurality of terminal devices forming a network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages; and

table means for storing therein identifiers and corresponding character-train information of persons using said virtual communications spaces, wherein;

said corresponding character-train information ~~trains are being~~ used as said message sender identifying information.

2. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 1 wherein said table means contains different character-train information for the identifier of a same one person for use in different ones of said virtual communications spaces.

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 1 wherein said table means contains different character-train information for the identifier of a same person for use in communications with different persons.

4. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 1 wherein said terminal devices use said table means in common.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 1 wherein the character-train information stored in said table means is accessible from said respective terminal devices.

6. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 1 wherein character-train information to be stored in said table means is set through terminal devices from which said messages are transmitted.

7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 1 wherein said network is formed of said plurality of terminal devices and a server, character-train information to be stored in said table means is set in said server.

8. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 1 wherein said message sender identifier is converted into the character-train information at the terminal device which has received the message.

9. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A chat system comprising:

a server;

a plurality of terminal devices forming a network with said server, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

a table disposed in said server for storing therein identifiers and corresponding character-train information of persons using said terminal devices; and

search means disposed in said server for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when said server receives said identifier and a message from said message sender, for transferring said character-train information together with said message.

10. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 9 wherein said sender identifier and message are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said sender identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and sender identifier.

11. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 9 wherein said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages designated; said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train information for respective message receivers; and said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A chat system comprising:

a server;

a plurality of terminal devices forming a network with said server, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

a table disposed in each of said terminal devices for storing therein identifiers and corresponding character-train information of persons using said terminal devices; and

search means disposed in each of said terminal devices for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when the terminal device receives said identifier and a message from said message sender, so that the character-train information is displayed together with the received message on said display means of said terminal device.

13. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A chat system comprising:

a server;

a plurality of terminal devices forming a network with said server, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

a table disposed in each of said terminal devices for storing therein identifiers and corresponding character-train information of persons using said terminal devices; and

search means disposed in each of said terminal devices for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when the terminal device transmits said identifier so that the character-train information is transmitted together with the message.

14. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 12 wherein said sender identifier and message are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and sender identifier.

15. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 13 wherein said sender identifier and message are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and identifier.

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 12 wherein said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages designated; said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train information for respective message receivers; and said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

17. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 13 wherein said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages designated; said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train information for respective message receivers; and said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A record medium for use in terminal device of a chat system, wherein a plurality of terminal devices form with a server a network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message

sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

said record medium being readable in each of said terminal devices;

said record medium including:

table means for storing therein identifiers of persons who use the chat system and corresponding character-train information; and

search means for searching said table means for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a person who is going to send a message and outputting the character-train information sought, as said message sender identifying information, for transmission with said message.

19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The record medium according to claim 18 wherein said identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table means has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table means for the character-train information corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and the identifier of said message sender.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to claim 18 wherein the identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said message designated; said table means has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers; and said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

21. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A record medium for use in a terminal device of a chat system, wherein a plurality of terminal devices form a network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

said record medium being readable in each of said terminal devices;

said record medium including:

table means for storing therein identifiers of persons who use the chat system and corresponding character-train information; and

search means for searching said table means for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of the message sender received through the virtual communication spaces and outputting the character-train information, as said message sender identifying information, for display on said display means.

22. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to claim 21 wherein said identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table means has stored therein different character-train information for said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and the identifier of said message sender.

23. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to claim 21 wherein the identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said message designated; said table means has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers; and said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

24. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A record medium for use in a server of a chat system, wherein said server forms a network with a plurality of terminal devices, said server being adapted to allow said plurality of terminal devices to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages;

said record medium being readable in said server;

said record medium including:

table means for storing therein identifiers of persons who use the chat system and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers; and

converting means for searching said table means for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of the message sender sent together with a message by any of said terminal devices and outputting the character-train information for sending it together with said message to a given virtual communication space.

25. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to claim 24 wherein said identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces;

said table means has stored therein different character-train information for said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces; and

said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and the identifier of said message sender.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The record medium according to claim 24 wherein the identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said message designated; said table means has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers; and said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver.

27. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A chat system comprising:

a plurality of terminal devices forming a network, said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network, the messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who sends the messages;

a memory having stored therein messages in association with identifiers of persons using said terminal devices; and

converting means for converting a designated one of said identifiers stored in said memory to a predetermined character train and causing said display means to display the character train.

28. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 27 wherein said network comprises a plurality of terminal devices and one server, and said memory is provided in

said server.

29. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 27 wherein said memory is provided in each of said terminal devices.

30. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The chat system according to claim 29 wherein said converting means is provided in each of said terminal devices.